

Fun Activities for Babytime

Week 1 BABIES FROM HEAD TO TOE

2+ months

Take an old, brightly colored sock and fill it with newspapers, tissues, or rags. Lay the baby on his back and put the sock ball on the baby's stomach. Roll it along the baby's body across the chest and up to the baby's neck. Does the baby attempt to reach for the sock ball or do his eyes just watch the movement? Repeat the activity and soon the baby will respond.

Skills developed - focusing on a moving object, eye-hand coordination

6+ months

Place a small toy, rattle or block inside a container with a lid. Close the lid, and shake the container to make a sound. Ask the baby what is inside. Open the container and let the baby peek inside. Then take the object out and let the baby look at it and feel it. Name the object and tell her to put it back in the container. Repeat as long as there is interest and then repeat at other times with different objects. *Skills developed – listening, eye-hand coordination, association skills*

12+ months

Place in a row such items as a cup, a block, a plastic toy, a small stuffed animal, and a paper bag. Name each object and instruct him to put it in the bag. Ask the child to empty the bag and do it again. At another time, place the items in different areas of the room in clear view and ask the child to put the objects in the bag. Encourage the child to work independently.

Skill developed: listening, following directions, language enrichment

*Oberlander, June R. Slow & Steady Get Me Ready. Burke, VA: Bio-Alpha Incorporated, 2002.

Week 2 RHYME TIME

3+ months

Hold your baby and sing a song such as "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." Sing the song to her in different voices, sometimes high and sometimes low. Change the position that you sing to her such as over one shoulder and then over the other shoulder.

Skill developed – differentiating sounds

6+ months

Use a pie pan and a spoon to make music. Hit the spoon on the pie pan a few times and then let the baby do it. As he hits the pan, sing a familiar song like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" or "Mary had a Little Lamb." As the baby hits the pan, clap your hands and sing.

Skills developed – listening, rhythm

9+ months

Choose three songs that your baby likes to sing. Clap hands as you sing one of the songs and clap your baby's hands as you sing the song again. Choose a second song and shake bells to the music. Sing the song again and let your baby shake the bells. Pick a third song and hit a wooden spoon against a metal pot. Repeat the song while your baby uses the spoon.

Skills developed: imitation, rhythm

*Silbert, Jackie. Games to Play with Babies, 3rd. ed. Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House, Inc. 2001.

Week 3 ANIMAL FUN

3+ months

Lie on the floor with your baby, on your tummies, facing each other. Wiggle your fingers and make them crawl like a spider. Make them disappear and reappear and always say, "Here comes a spider!" Crawl your hands over different parts of your baby's body, such as his fingers and then his nose, etc.

Skills developed - focusing on a moving object, anticipation

6+ months

Find a set of animals. Hold up each animal, say its name, and let your baby feel it. While she is holding the animal, repeat its name and the sound it makes.

Sing the song "Old MacDonald had a Farm" and as you sing each verse, pick up the animal that is named and move it around. *Skills developed – listening, language skills*

9+ months

Recite the following poem:

*Mr. Bear, Mr. Bear, where can you be?
I will find you, wait and see.*

Take a bear or another stuffed animal (just change the name in the poem) and hide it as your baby watches. Ask your child to find the bear. Describe where the bear is hidden using words like "under," "behind," "inside," and so on. Repeat this activity again and again since your baby will love finding the bear and giving it you to hide again. *Skill developed: listening, following directions, language enrichment, spatial relationships*

*Silbert, Jackie. Games to Play with Babies, 3rd. ed. Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House, Inc. 2001.

Week 4 WIGGLES, GIGGLES, & BUBBLES

3-6+ months

Use a variety of bubble-blowing toys to blow different-sized bubbles for your baby. Tracking the bubbles in mid-air helps your baby practice visual skills such as eye-tracking, distance, and depth perception. Bubbles are a great distraction during diaper-changing time and fun and mess-free in the bathtub. For older babies, try to hold the bubble on the end of a wand for a moment. Your baby may want to try to touch the bubble, and make it "POP!" (Be sure to wash baby's hands afterward).

Skills developed – cause and effect, eye-hand coordination, visual development

9+ months

Take a blanket or bed sheet and have an adult or older child assist you in holding the edges. Put some light-weight balls or a beach ball in the middle and shake the blanket. Try to shake the blanket lightly at first, then more vigorously. Add a rhyme like “Popcorn, Popcorn” for even more fun! *Skills developed – cause and effect, rhythm exploration.*

Popcorn, popcorn, sizzling in the pan.

Shake it up, shake it up, bam bam bam.

Popcorn, popcorn, now it's getting hot.

Shake it up, shake it up, pop pop pop.

*Masi, Wendy S., PhD. & Leiderman, Roni Cohen, PhD. Baby Play: 100 Fun-Filled Activities to Maximize Your Baby's Potential. San Francisco, CA: Weldon Owen Publishing. 2001.

Week 5 Bedtime Activities

Bedtime Activities

- Make up a story to tell your baby that uses her name. Use the story to describe things that your baby has done during the day. Use your child's name as often as possible.
- Lullabies and music help soothe babies so that they will quickly fall asleep. Sing this easy song, using your baby's own name.

(Tune: “Good Night, Ladies.”)

Good night, baby, (Insert your child's name.)

Good night, baby,

Good night, baby,

It's time to go to sleep.

Sleep tight, baby,

Sleep tight, baby,

Sleep tight, baby,

Time to close your eyes.

*Silbert, Jackie. Games to Play with Babies, 3rd. ed. Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House, Inc. 2001.

Week 6 PEEK-A-BOO! I LOVE YOU

3+ months

Play peek-a-boo with your baby using a blanket or a diaper. Or put a light towel over your baby's face and then whisk it off. A newborn baby thinks that when an object disappears it no longer exists. However, playing peek-a-boo can help your baby learn that even if you're momentarily hidden, you're still there!

Skills developed – social development, object permanence

6+ months

Use large swim tubes for lots of fun on dry land! Sitters and crawlers enjoy using the tubes for sitting support. Also, play peek-a-boo in the rings by sitting your baby down on one and stack others up to her chest. Lift each one off while calling "Peek-a-boo!" Babies who are more mobile will enjoy creeping and crawling in and out of several tubes placed on the floor.

Skills developed – balance, gross motor skills, object permanence

*Masi, Wendy S., PhD. & Leiderman, Roni Cohen, PhD. Baby Play: 100 Fun-Filled Activities to Maximize Your Baby's Potential. San Francisco, CA: Weldon Owen Publishing. 2001.

9+ months

Draw a picture of a baby on a large piece of paper. Glue pieces of material over individual parts of the body, such as hands, head, toes, knees and tummy. Ask your baby where the different parts are located, such as the baby's head and then say, "Hello, head!" Continue this game, naming the other parts.

Skills developed: body awareness, language skills

*Silbert, Jackie. Games to Play with Babies, 3rd. ed. Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House, Inc. 2001.